The Case Against Quality

Question:

Samoht, I am managing a project that is running a bit behind budget. I am not sure how I am going to get back on track – if we continue the project as we have planned, we will never be able to make our budget! I am very tempted to "cheat" a little on the quality of the deliverable in order to make budget. Is this a bad idea?

Bill

Answer:

Bill

Don't think of it as "cheating". In my country of Putympkin we simply call it "cutting corners". This makes it sound like you are talking about construction or engineering discipline.

I think you have a great idea! It is my strong belief that making a so-called "quality" product is highly overrated because, let's face it, quality is both expensive and difficult. This extra expense and work is absolutely unnecessary, and I do not know how any organization can justify it. Let's take a look at just some of the many unnecessary costs of quality:

- **Deliverable reviews.** As we all know, reviewing deliverables is a waste of time. Who wants to check work that was already done? If your team members do their job correctly there should be no errors. Besides it is boring. Right? This is one quality-related expense you can do without.

- **Quality Management Plan.** Since when has any project ever gone according to plan? Why bother creating a good one for quality? I have also heard from some crazy Agile people that "planning" is good but a "plan" is useless. To be honest I have no idea what this means other that it confirms my thinking that Plans are worthless. Besides they are boring. I prefer to fly by the seat of my pants, especially when it comes to quality. It keeps things exciting and fun! This is another expense that you can skip.

- **Client approval.** The time and effort required for the client to review interim and final deliverables and formally approve them is expensive and unnecessary. After all, isn't your client going to complain no matter what? Why should you spend time (and therefore money) to listen to them complain about each deliverable? Clients also tell me that reviewing deliverables is boring. And here we have yet another expense to skip!

- **Testing.** Testing is completely boring. Why would you want to waste your time and money on something so mundane? They know that whatever is built when the money runs out is what they are going to be stuck with. Once the deliverable is completed and people begin using it, they are essentially "testing" it anyway. Plus, if there are problems, well, that is what the support team is for, right? Do I really have to tell you that I recommend skipping this?

- **Quality control standards.** Standards? They are boring! Skip!

- **Checklists.** These are usually used to validate that all steps of a process were completed or all the components of a deliverable are in place. I find that clients are more interested in making sure that all the boxes are checked than understanding what the checkmarks mean. You know why – because checklists are boring! Skip them.

- **Audits.** Audits are opportunities to have an outside party review the processes used to create your deliverables. You know what I think about audits? They are boring! You think I would tell you to skip audits? Wrong! This is actually very important and should never be skipped. This third-party person will be the one who you can blame if there are any quality problems, so make sure you choose accordingly.

So there you go! High quality is boring. When quality is a little off, there is a lot of drama and excitement. I could also go on and on about what a waste of money managing quality is. I now say, spread the word! Let us lead the way in a revolution against quality! (Just don't tell your support team.)